
DESIGNATION
by the District of Columbia

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
in Historic Landmark Designation Case No. 02-03

Old Engine House 10
1341 Maryland Avenue, NE
Square 1028, Lot 830

The Historic Preservation Review Board, having held a public hearing on January 24, 2008 on the application for historic designation of the property known as Old Engine House 10, 1341 Maryland Avenue, NE, hereby designates the property a historic landmark to be entered in the *District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites* and requests that, with the consent of the owner, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer forward the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places with a positive recommendation for listing the property as of local significance.

As inscribed on its façade, Engine House 10 was erected in 1894 (but not complete until its July 1895 opening) to serve the Stanton Park neighborhood, the northern portion of Capitol Hill, and the emerging suburban subdivisions of Trinidad and Ivy City. One of a series of eight District firehouses designed by Leon Emile Dessez (1858-1919), it was very similar to his since-demolished Old Engine House 11 of 1895 and is probably the best and most characteristic example of a Victorian-era firehouse still owned by the District.¹

The multiple-property thematic document *Washington's Pre-World War II Firehouses* divides this approximately 150-year span² into four periods, distinguished by the organization of firefighting operations and technology, by architectural style and by who was responsible for the design of the buildings. The study includes Old Engine 10 as one of the last of the remaining "Victorian" (1864-1897) buildings. Indeed, it shares the arrangement of the front pedestrian entrance between two vehicle bays that typified the post-Civil War stations and the use of some wonderful exterior limestone and terra cotta common on those built in the mid 1880s through mid 1890s.

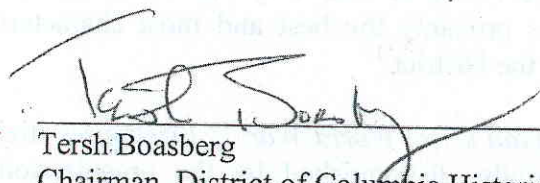
The automobile era made most of these earlier and smaller firehouses obsolete. The faster automobile also increased the service areas for engine and truck companies, causing some

¹ Eclectic in his influences and tastes, Dessez changed with the times and is perhaps best known for the Superintendent's House (1891-1893) at the Naval Observatory, now known as "Admiralty House" and home of the U.S. Vice President. He also designed the Observatory's boiler house and dynamo house (1891), Miner Normal School (1913-1914) at Howard University, the Cady-Lee House in Takoma Park (1887), the Stoddert apartment house in Georgetown (1899), the Elkton apartments on Capitol Hill (1905), and St. James' Episcopal Church in Leesburg (1895-1897), among others. From the turn of the twentieth century, many of his firehouse designs were more formally and academically influenced by Italian Renaissance architecture.

² The construction dates of the *extant* firehouses discussed in the document spans only a century, however.

firehouses to be "surplussed" as they became redundant. In 1940, Engine Company 10 was folded into the 1925 Truck 13 building around the corner at 1342 Florida Avenue. The old building was used by community groups for some years. Now vacant, the property is the subject of a present District request for redevelopment proposals.

- Old Engine House 10 was originally constructed for, although no longer used by, the District of Columbia's professional firefighting force. Over the years, the personnel and equipment headquartered here have fought numerous fires and effected numerous rescues. The firehouse has been a visual landmark of the neighborhood since its construction, setting the tone for institutional and commercial construction on Maryland Avenue, and likely further encouraged such development by protecting the building stock in the area (Historic Preservation Review Board Landmark Criterion B and National Register Criterion A).
- The utility of Old Engine House 10 was, of course, the principal consideration in its construction. It is one of the best and most characteristic of the extant, District-owned, Victorian firehouses, designed by one of the leading lights of the local chapter of the AIA, who was responsible for the largest number of firehouse commissions in the city.³ (Historic Preservation Review Board Landmark Criterion D and National Register Criteria B and C).
- Despite some unfortunate painting, window and door replacements, and a front entrance vestibule addition, Old Engine House 10 is well preserved, having maintained most of its exterior appearance and character (Historic Preservation Review Board Criterion B).



Tersh Boasberg

Chairman, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board

³ Municipal Architect Ashford Snowden was undoubtedly involved with at least as many designs, but not as principal designer.